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NEWS RELEASE

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Phillip Abdul Dozier, also known as "Bootsie", age 26, of Norfolk, Virginia, was found guilty yesterday by a jury following a two day trial in the U.S. District Court in Norfolk on charges of possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon and possession of crack cocaine. Sentencing was set for May 26, 2004. Dozier faces up to 11 years in prison.

The federal charges arose out of Dozier's arrest by Portsmouth police officers on September 3, 2003, in the Jeffrey Wilson public housing area. Dozier had a loaded .45 caliber semiautomatic pistol and baggies containing crack cocaine. He had previously been warned for trespassing at the Wilson housing area and was prohibited from returning there. The case was referred for federal prosecution under Project EXILE.

Project EXILE is a multi-agency joint federal and state task force targeting armed criminals for prosecution in federal court for possession or use of firearms in violation of federal laws. It is a part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a nationwide effort by the Department of Justice aimed at reducing violent crimes. Since its inception in Hampton Roads in late 1997, Project EXILE has produced over 806 convictions and removed over 1473 firearms from armed criminals.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Portsmouth Police officers, and prosecuted for the United States by Special Assistant United States Attorney Andrew M. Robbins, a Portsmouth Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney specially designated to prosecute firearms cases in federal court.

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